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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NAIROBI 001958

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/E AND A/S FRAZER

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SUBJECT: SOMALIA - PARLIAMENT MOVES TO UNSEAT PRIME MINISTER

REF: NAIROBI

Classified By: PolOff Jessica Davis Ba. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY. On August 12, Somalia's Transitional Federal Parliament submitted a petition to the Speaker to table a motion of no confidence against Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein. Although this motion has been in the works for weeks, it gained momentum as a result of high level pressure by individuals aligned with President Yusuf who are seeking to undermine the PM and his cabinet. Some parliamentarians have reportedly received generous payoffs to support the motion and our contacts tell us that President Yusuf directly contacted others with promises of future positions in exchange for their support. There do not appear to be enough votes to unseat the PM, who continues to enjoy support by his clan and many others across clan lines. The Speaker has not convened Parliament in order to diffuse this movement against the PM, but is facing intense pressure to allow the motion to proceed to a vote. The Prime Minister remains in Mogadishu, refusing to take part in "efforts by the spoilers to undermine the peace process." End Summary.

Parliament Moves to Unseat Prime Minister

12. (C) Since mid-July, there has been a renewed effort within the Parliament to unseat Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein. Our contacts report that President Yusuf and his coterie are behind this move to pass a vote of no confidence against the PM. While the movement by the legislative body against the PM began with legitimate questions about progress on reconciliation, security, and budgetary and financial matters, it has escalated into a political maneuver to destabilize Hussein's government. At present, the Prime minister continues to enjoy broad support within his clan and across clan lines, but alliances are fragile at best.

13. (C) Between 50-80 parliamentarians signed an August 11 petition recommending that the Speaker of Parliament Sheikh Aden Mohamed Nur "Madobe" table the no-confidence vote. On August 13, we were told that 89 MPs were supporting this measure. The petition reportedly faults the PM and his ministers for failing to bring the security situation under control and for still not presenting a national budget. We understand that a committee of MPs launched an investigation as a compromise when the Speaker refused to table an earlier no confidence motion at the end of July. We have met with and spoken to the Speaker several times, cautioning him against allowing a vote of no-confidence against the PM. His aides tell us that while he has been successful thus far, it

is increasingly difficult to stave off the pressure by the MPs who are clamoring for a vote.

¶4. (C) Our interlocutors tell us that Parliament's zeal to unseat the PM is directly influenced by President Yusuf. MPs from within both factions have told us that in the last few days, significant sums of cash have begun circulating among the legislators to influence this process. One contact told us that on August 11, approximately USD 400,000 arrived in Baidoa and influential MPs have received USD 3,000 to support a vote against the PM. When asked about the origin of the funds, our contact said that he understood that they were a portion of the USD 3 million contributed by Oman to the TFG. (Note: These are the same funds the PM told us never arrived into the Treasury and were divided among Yusuf and his coterie, with no official reports on its use. End Note.). President Yusuf has also reportedly called MPs in recent days, asking them what they want in exchange for their votes against the PM. MPs have told us their colleagues have been promised key positions in a "post Nur Adde government" by Yusuf and those close to him.

Counting the Votes

¶5. (C) Under Somalia's Transitional Federal Charter, the Parliament ratifies the President's Prime Ministerial appointments and it has the power to recommend the PM's removal and by extension, his cabinet. With 275 members, an absolute majority of votes would be needed to pass a

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no-confidence measure. Most of our contacts doubt that there are enough votes within Parliament to pass a motion against the PM. However, they also concede that with payoffs, votes against the PM will likely increase. Supporters of the PM told us that Prime Minister Hussein will not "stoop to the level of the spoilers who want to undermine the Djibouti Agreement and the country for their own personal gain." The PM does not have significant financial resources at his command and is reportedly not using monetary incentives to strengthen his lobby.

¶6. (SBU) Parliament's membership is based on the 4.5 formula for clan representation. Our contacts estimate that the PM has the support of the overwhelming majority of the 61 Hawiye MPs, that the 61 Digil and Mirifle MPs and the 61 Dir MPs are split about 60 percent in support of the PM, and the 31 MPs from minority clans are evenly split in their support of PM Hussein and President Yusuf. The majority of the 61 Darod MPs support President Yusuf, their fellow clan member. Based on these numbers, some have argued that the MPs should be allowed to vote on the motion, to demonstrate the lack of support within Parliament to unseat the PM.

¶7. (SBU) While the current efforts are focused on a no-confidence motion against the PM, there is a parallel effort by some MPs to launch an impeachment process against President Yusuf. However, this movement has yet to gain significant steam and the impeachment process requires a two-thirds majority to pass. While there have been recent public demonstrations against Yusuf, this counter-measure is designed more as a way to derail the no-confidence move against the PM rather than a serious move to unseat President Yusuf.

Speaker Resisting the Pressure

¶8. (C) The Speaker of Parliament has a key role to play in this process, and thus far, he has been resisting mounting pressure to allow the no-confidence measure to go to vote. Based on parliamentary rules, at least five working days must pass before a motion can be debated by the legislative body.

Since the petition to table the motion was presented to the Speaker on August 12, we understand that no formal debate would occur before August 19. In addition, the 9 person committee that sets the legislative agenda must agree to place it on the calendar. (Note: This committee is chaired by the Speaker and comprises the two Deputy Speakers, three whips, and three secretaries. End Note.). The Speaker has some discretion in the process and can potentially delay any no-confidence vote for an indeterminate period.

¶9. (C) The Nairobi-based donors have all expressed concerns about this move to the Speaker and have asked him to personally prevent a move against the PM. While he has thus far been successful in doing so, he is facing mounting pressure by the MPs who are charging forward to dissolve PM Hussein's government. We understand that several MPs told the Speaker that if he does not convene Parliament and preside over the vote, he too will be removed. On August 14, we were told that at least 18 MPs have asked for their names to be removed from the petition, as a result of international opposition to the move against the PM. While arbitrating between Baidoa-based factions within the Parliament, Speaker Madobe is also reportedly mediating between President Yusuf and PM Hussein. While there is no imminent action against PM Hussein, the conflict within the legislature is a significant distraction from more important work the TFG could be doing, like supporting the Djibouti Agreement.

Post Actions

¶10. (C) In several conversations and meetings, we have made to U.S. position clear to the Speaker. On July 25, SE Yates told Madobe that if Parliament votes out the PM, we are back at square one, without a driver for implementing the Djibouti Agreement or moving forward on the transition, and the entire U.S. support for the TFG would be called into question. On August 12, Ambassador Ranneberger told Speaker Madobe that we expected him to prevent any move against the PM. The Speaker

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said all the right things, telling the Ambassador that he hoped to focus the MPs efforts on more productive tasks.

¶11. (SBU) We have spoken to several members of Parliament to encourage them to focus on supporting the Djibouti Agreement, instead of rallying significant human and financial resources on no-confidence measures. By focusing high level attention on the August 16-18 meeting between the TFG and the ARS to implement the Djibouti Agreement, we are shifting the focus from internal conflict to concrete efforts to promote peace.
RANNEBERGER